

Read the text below and answer Questions 7–14.

Flu: the facts

- A** Flu (influenza) is an acute viral respiratory infection. It spreads easily from person to person: at home, at school, at work, at the supermarket or on the train.
- B** It gets passed on when someone who already has flu coughs or sneezes and is transmitted through the air by droplets, or it can be spread by hands infected by the virus.
- C** Symptoms can include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, extreme fatigue, a dry cough, sore throat and stuffy nose. Most people will recover within a week but flu can cause severe illness or even death in people at high risk. It is estimated that 18,500–24,800 deaths in England and Wales are attributable to influenza infections annually.
- D** Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection. Although anyone can catch flu, certain people are at greater risk from the implications of flu, as their bodies may not be able to fight the virus. If you are over 65 years old, or suffer from asthma, diabetes, or certain other conditions, you are considered at greater risk from flu and the implications can be serious. If you fall into one of these 'at-risk' groups, are pregnant or a carer, you are eligible for a free flu vaccination.
- E** If you are not eligible for a free flu vaccination, you can still protect yourself and those around you from flu by getting a flu vaccination at a local pharmacy.
- F** About seven to ten days after vaccination, your body makes antibodies that help to protect you against any similar viruses that may infect you. This protection lasts about a year.
- G** A flu vaccination contains inactivated, killed virus strains so it can't give you the flu. However, a flu vaccination can take up to two weeks to begin working, so it is possible to catch flu in this period.
- H** A flu vaccination is designed to protect you against the most common and potent strains of flu circulating so there is a small chance you could catch a strain of flu not contained in the flu vaccine.
- I** The influenza virus is constantly changing and vaccines are developed to protect against the predicted strains each year so it is important to get vaccinated against the latest strains.

Speak to your GP or nurse today to book your flu vaccination.